PS 3507
.0325 C5

1919

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Chaff

A little book of home-made verse

By

Louis L. Dodge

PS3507
.O325C5
1919

Copyright, 1919
by
LOUIS L. DODGE
Minneapolis, Minn.

DEC 27 1919

BYRON & LEARNED COMPANY
PRINTERS :: MINNEAPOLIS

©CLA561125

To My Wife, who so patiently listens
To all of these things that I write,
And who makes, now and then, a suggestion
That helps me to write them aright.

It is true, they are my composition,
I can't very well dodge the blame,
But 'tis she who supplies inspiration—
And that is, at least, half the game.

IN the days of conservation
We were saving all the waste,
And were warming up left-overs,
Hoping they might tempt the taste.

Though there's yet no dearth of rhymsters,
Nor of amateurish verse,
And we're taking what they're grinding
Out, for better or for worse;

Still I've threshed again the remnants,
For a heart throb or a laugh,
Thinking I might find, unwinnowed,
Some good grain amongst the CHAFF.

Contents

Our Flag - - - - - - - - - 13
Aspiration and Arrival - - - - - 14
Minnesota - - - - - - - - 16
On the Stair - - - - - - - 17
The Lone Pine - - - - - - - 18
It is May - - - - - - - - 20
Inquire Within - - - - - - 21
What's the Use - - - - - - 22
J. W. R. at Sixty-two - - - - - 24
The County Fair - - - - - - 26
Strike Twelve - - - - - - - 27
The Coming of Spring - - - - - 28
Requiescat - - - - - - - 31
The Cayuse - - - - - - - 32
Innate Melody - - - - - - - 35
A Sleigh Ride - - - - - - - 36
Lullaby - - - - - - - - 37
The Thanksgiving Baby - - - - - 38
Red Cloud - - - - - - - 40
A Prayer for Peace - - - - - - 43
Christmas - - - - - - - 44
Halley's Comet - - - - - - 46
The Alkali Club - - - - - - 48
A Valentine - - - - - - - 51
Autumn - - - - - - - - 52
Blueberry Pie - - - - - - - 54
The Corn Frolic - - - - - - 56
The Barometer - - - - - - - 57
Crooked Bill - - - - - - - 58
Accountics - - - - - - - 62
An Un-even Exchange - - - - - 63

Contents—*Continued*

Time - - - - - - - - - - 64
Not Complainin' - - - - - - - 66
An Indian Grave - - - - - - - 68
Shakespeare-Bacon - - - - - - 70
N-E-W-S - - - - - - - - - 71
Immaculate - - - - - - - - 72
The Legend of Oco-Como-Chee - - - 74
Recognition - - - - - - - - 77
The Drouth - - - - - - - - 78
An American - - - - - - - - 80
In the Open - - - - - - - - 82
The Sun Dial - - - - - - - - 83
Montana - - - - - - - - - 84
Hallowe'en - - - - - - - - 86
High Tide 1919 - - - - - - - 88
Infinite Harmony - - - - - - 90
Dedication, Plymouth Congregational Church - 92

Chaff

Our Flag

UNFURL the flag to the winds that blow,
From early morn 'til the after-glow;
O'er all the land, from sea unto sea,
The Stars and Stripes our one flag shall be.

Its stripes of red and its stripes of white
Betoken life, and betoken right;
Its scattered stars and its field of blue,
The things we hold to be good and true.

Its red was caught from the flush of dawn,
Its blue, from skies with the darkness gone,
Its white, from clouds in the morning haze,
Its stars are from the celestial maze.

It floats and flutters through waking hours
On land, from tops of the tallest towers;
In sunshine bright and in chilling blast,
At sea, it flies from the swaying mast.

It speaks to each in his native tongue
The message clear which the old bell rung.
The one word Liberty is its call,
Proclaimed throughout the whole land, to all.

Then, free and glorious may it wave!
The flag of all who are true and brave
And just and generous, kind and strong!
But never once may it shelter wrong!

Aspiration and Arrival

IMPRINTED on the cover of a book
Of lessons, conned in childhood days
Long past, appeared, with eager, yearning look
A boy and girl, whose raptured gaze
Was fixed upon a temple in the sky;
Depicted there to represent
That youth should set its life's objective high,
And be with nothing less content.

The path which led towards the airy shrine,
Though indistinct, was winding, steep
And rough, while banks of cloud the long incline
Almost obscured. Their fancy's leap,
However, bridged the space that intervened,
Transporting them to yonder tower
In contemplation, where they fondly dreamed
Of knowledge, wealth, achievement, power.

The little volume, in a well thumbed row,
Abides among the stepping stones
That stretch from youth to years; and still, although
'Tis marred and worn, one can the tones,
The shades and shapes discern. There stand the pair,
Anticipation undefaced,
And there the faded vision, high in air.
But not one step of path they've paced.

Hand clasped in hand, as in the former time,
Near half a lifetime spent in thought
On future plans; no effort made to climb;
They've missed the longed-for goal. O'er-wrought
By contemplating what he hopes some day
To do or be, if one who hears
The call delays the toilsome, plodding way
To take, and wastes the fleeting years;

To such a one, good night to all the aims,
The aspirations and the hopes
That animate the mind of youth. On fame's
Long roll his name is missed; he gropes
Through life; for, as a picture dulls, so fades
The vision if 'tis not pursued:
No yearning counts, no flight of fancy aids,
'Twill disappear or search elude.

Start not in life without an aim in sight,
A well defined and settled end
To reach: towards which look forward, that the light
Of radiant vision may attend
Your progress and illume the path. Do not,
How'ere entrancing though, too oft
Intently gaze, or long; but sometimes blot
From sight the object set aloft.

Press on your way intently, without pause,
Pursue untiringly the course
Marked out, however long and hard. Your cause,
The end you seek, shall be a source
Of inspiration, strength and help untold;
And, as you journey, now and then
Look up. The destination you behold
Will urge you on, enlarge your ken.

But not too lofty, nor too low, a mark
Set up; that neither may you tire
Of long delay, nor that too soon your barque
Grounds shore, and you from strife retire.
First choose some high ambition to be gained—
The greatest good, a lifetime's quest;
Then set some lower goals, that they, attained,
Encourage you to reach the best.

Minnesota

A TRIBUTE to thee, Minnesota,
The state of the high northern star,—
Fair "land of the sky-tinted waters,"
Reflecting white clouds drifting far.

Where grain fields, ripe, wave in the breezes,
And pine trees grow stately and high
In clear bracing air that's like nectar,
Beneath a most wondrous blue sky.

Where lakes, like rare gems, have been scattered
Broadcast, by the liberal hand
Of Him, who so signally blesses
This bountiful, beautiful land.

While dense wooded ranges and swamp lands
Hide deep buried treasures of ore;
And wide, fertile stretches of prairie
Yield ever a rich, golden store.

The source of the "Father of Waters,"
And some lesser rivers, that run
From slow-melting snows in the wood lands,
And ripple and dance in the sun.

Here; bold voyageurs and the red men
Have left some weird tales of romance,
Along with their trails through the forest,
In this one-time land of New France;

Where later have come through the portals,
Swung wide by thy welcoming hands,
The best and the sturdiest manhood
From this, and from far distant lands.

And here, in this region propitious
For life and for effort, as well,
With tall, stalwart sons and fair daughters,
In health and in competence dwell.

On The Stair

WHEN I met her on the landing
Of the quaint, old-fashioned stair,
In a stately country mansion,
With the sunlight in her hair,
And the pink and white commingling
In her smiling face, as fair
As her azure eyes were sparkling;—
While she paused a moment, where,
Wafted through the open window,
Came the blossom-scented air,
And demurely said, "good-morning"—
I'm amazed that I should dare
Thus to venture—but temptation
So assailed me, and her rare
Grace and beauty so allured me,
That I flung to winds all care
For the consequences rising
From my rashness, and right there,
But quite guilelessly, I kissed her,
As we met upon the stair.

The Lone Pine

IN the land of the Dakotas,
Where a rambling range of hills
Interrupts the prairie's level,
And the wintry blast that chills;
Half way up a barren incline,
With this one exception, free
From all other arborescence,
Long there stood a lone pine tree.

Sole survivor of a forest
That, perhaps in former day,
Clothed these heights in shining verdure,
Then succumbed to slow decay;
Or a seed, some time transported
From the pine belt, North and East,
On the wings of driving tempest,
Or, conveyed by bird or beast,

Found a lodgment in some crevice:
Where, protected from the storm,
Nourished by the virgin humus
And by summer suns kept warm,
Slowly taking root and soaring,
Year by year it gained in girth,
Reached at length its consummation,
Pointing skyward, fixed in earth.

Rendezvous, for generations,
And a tribal council place
Of the redmen, when returning
From the warpath or the chase.
There they sent, by fire code signals,
Messages to friendly folk,
Watching then the distant hilltops
For the answering spires of smoke.

Landmark of the early settlers,
Seeking homes within the West,
Guiding them o'er pathless prairies
To the haven of their quest.
Sentinel on outpost duty,
Ceaselessly, relieved by none.
Shelter for the migrant bird life;
Refuge from the burning sun.

Stands there still that lonely monarch
Of the windswept crested plain,
With its evergreen leaves spreading,
Drinking in the dew and rain?
No conjecture can I offer,
For a score of years have passed
Since I saw it, in the glory
Of an autumn evening, last.

Then, perceptibly, 'twas aging,
For it long had passed its prime,
Lost its once majestic grandeur
And was scarred by passing time;
Marks of life-long isolation
And an uncongenial soil;
All thrive best in aggregation,
Trees that grow, and men who toil.

One could wish some friendly woodman's
Stroke had felled it, or a gust,
Blown from frozen Northland's fastness,
Might have leveled it in dust;
That its timber, builded into,
Might have helped to make a home,
And a dwelling of contentment
For a tiller of the loam;

Rather than, that as the final
  Remnant of a vanished race—
Like the last man on a waning
  Planet, bound with slackened pace
To extinction—useless longer,—
  Stripped, bereft, without a friend,
Wasting into dissolution,
  It had lingered to the end.

It Is May

THERE are lilies in the valleys,
  And the violets are blue;
Yellow cowslips dot the meadows:
  There are lilacs blooming, too.
Welcome sights and sounds of springtime
  Throng the earth and fill the air:
While the fragrance of the blossoms
  Is as incense, everywhere.

Inquire Within

THERE'S abundance of good nature
In 'most everyone you know,
If you'll only turn the spigot
So 'twill have a chance to flow.
But it's barreled up or bottled,
And the cork's pressed down with care;
There is not much effervescence
'Til you mix it with the air.

When a fellow's unresponsive,
Looks unhappy—even glum—
Wears a cloud upon his forehead
And seems altogether dumb,
Like a fireproof safe, unopened,
Hard as steel and cold as ice;—
Just apply the combination
And the door swings in a trice;

Yielding to the gentle pressure
And the sympathetic turn
One can give, if slightly skillful,
Or has taken pains to learn;
Thus revealing charms and graces,
Such a shining goodly hoard
As you never had suspected—
Right before you, safely stored.

There's a smile just 'neath the surface
And a twinkle of the eye,
With a cheery word of greeting,
In 'most every passer-by.
If you'll only press the button
And expose the film inside,
You will get a pleasing picture
And may gain a friend beside.

What's the Use?

WHAT'S the use, one often wonders,
Of a lot of things he sees,
Of unnecessary fixings,—
Customs, habits, gnats and fleas?

Just for instance, take the fellow
Who approaches with a nudge.
Why do neckties stick in collars,
And refuse to slide or budge?

What's the use of cuffs on trousers—
Or of lining in men's hats—
Of those backless, blue, bath slippers
And now, what's the use of spats?

What's the use of furs in summer,
To protect a lady's throat,
When she goes without in winter,
In a low-necked, open coat?

What's the use of broken arches;
Or, for that, of getting stout—
Of appendices and tonsils,
When the doctors cut them out?

What's the use of having whiskers,
When you never let them grow—
Or of chanticler awakening
One so early, by his crow?

What's the use, if they're protested,
Of endorsing people's notes;—
What's the use of horns on bossy,
Or of beards on billy goats?

What's the use of trimming Fido,
In fantastic, hairy dress,
So's to look just like a lion,
And not like a lioness?

What's the use of fat policemen
When a thief is built to run;
Or that ancient witticism,
Just the ordinary pun?

What's the use of ticks and chiggers,
Or of corns upon the toes;—
And, the Madagascar savage
Wonders, what's the use of clothes?

What's the use of filthy lucre
When it's fame you're working for?
And, no doubt, there now are Germans
Asking, what's the use of war?

To J. W. R. at Sixty-Two

October 7th, 1915

"HEAR about James Whitcomb Riley,
At his home on Lock'bie Street,
How he had a birth-day party
And was sixty-two last week?
'Twas a reg'lar celebration
And a holiday for him,
Up and down old Indiany,
All because he's our own Jim."

"Sixty-two? Why I remember
When he was a little chap,
Runnin' barefoot through the medder;
Tappin' maples for the sap;
Huntin' nests of bumble bees, or
Sittin' with a fishin' pole
Waitin' for a bite; or mebby,
Splashin' 'round the 'swimmin'-hole.'

"Always was an outdoor feller,
'Mongst the trees and flowers and birds.
Must have learned that way the knack of
Puttin' them in rhymin' words;
'Cause there seems a kind of rhythm
Pulsin' through a summer's day,
In the swayin' of the branches
And the tune the raindrops play.

"Then he writes 'bout common people,
Usin' words one comprehends,
Tales of natch'rul little children
And of loyal old time friends;
All so comfortin' and helpful,
When the heart is worn and sad,—
Then so bright and strong and cheerin',
Makin' ev'rybody glad.

"Jest to think of 'Old Aunt Mary'
And the days of 'Summertime,'
'Orphant Annie,' and the story
Of 'An Old Sweetheart of Mine.'
'When the Frost is on the Punnkin,'
'Old October's' in the wake,
Don't one recollect the good things
'Like his Mother used to Make'?

"Here's my best wish, then, for Riley,
As he journeys down the years.
May he keep on makin' verses
Of the kind that always cheers.
As he's brightened lives of others,
May his cup, from day to day,
Long with joy be runnin' over,
Ere 'tis said that he's 'Away.' "

The County Fair

MAY I take you, next week Thursday, to the fair?
There'll be pumpkins, squash and rutabagas there,
Horses, cattle, grain and spuds,
Farmers' wives in Sunday duds
And a lot of tempting things to eat and wear.

In the early afternoon I'll call for you,
With a nifty nag and rig I think will do,
We will clatter down the pike
At a pretty lively hike,
In a classy single buggy, seating two.

After passing through the crowded entrance gate
We will drive around a little, while we wait
For the races to begin.
Then we'll have a seat within,
Where the patrons of the grandstand congregate.

We will wander through the grounds, just you and I,
Quite regardless of the others passing by.
You'll inspect the fancy work,
And may learn the latest quirk
In the making of a tidy or a pie.

We will patronize the roasted peanut stand,
See the clowns and watch the rubber man expand,—
Have a little lemonade,
Seated somewhere in the shade,
While we listen to the playing of the band.

Every show, that's worth the while, we will attend,
Unexpected, perhaps, may meet a friend.
On the carousel we'll ride,
See the giant petrified,—
And we'll watch the daring aeronaut ascend.

When we've seen enough to make us tired and wise,
And inspected this and that which took a prize,
Then I'll take you to your home,
In the early evening gloam,
As the full-orbed silvery moon begins to rise.

Strike Twelve

GIVE out of the best that is in you,
Be satisfied never with less.
Devote to each task every talent
And all of the skill you possess.

No matter how humble the service,
How tiresome and toilsome your job,
You can't be a man if you slight it.
It's you, not some other, you rob.

You owe to yourself, and your manhood,
The utmost of effort and pains,
In each enterprise you engage in,
Regardless of losses or gains.

'Tis only the slacker and laggard
Who's looking for something for naught,
Who thinks the world owes him a living,
And never does half that he ought.

Rejoice in the gifts you inherit,
The strength of your body and mind;
There's little one cannot accomplish,
With will and high purpose combined.

Remember, though, in your endeavor
For riches, attainment and fame,
That nothing counts more than the growth of
Your soul, of your heart and good name;

That never the self-seeking schemer,
By virtue of might or of nerve,
Is rated as high, or commended,
As he who his neighbor doth serve.

The Coming of Spring

WHEN the earth, in yearly circuit
'Round the shining zodiac,
Has attained the winter solstice,
And starts on its southward track;
Then the daylight gains on darkness,
As the sun comes slowly back,
While the temperatures diminish,
And the wind finds every crack.

Swirling blizzards sweep the highways,
And the mercury congeals,
White flakes build fantastic structures,
And an icy sheeting seals
Every lake and rill and river,
While the weather chart reveals
Nothing but continued rigors:
Snow storms tread on snow storms' heels.

Frigid blasts force hibernation.
Penetrating cold benumbs.
Frost festoons the trees and bushes.
Tingling aches strike through the thumbs.
Gloves and mitts give scant protection,
When the biting north wind comes,
Rattling, slamming doors and windows,
Like a hundred beating drums.

Then, as when the night seems darkest,
Morning's advent is at hand;—
When the straight lane seems unending,
Just ahead a turn is scanned;—
So, when tempests roar and startle,
Jack Frost seems in stern command,
Be not terrified nor daunted—
'Tis his last forlorn-hope stand.

For the solar fires, rekindled,
Shine with an intenser ray;
Soon the ice king's jurisdiction
And the harshness of his sway
Terminated, crumbled, broken,
Will assuredly give way;
And the earth, her shackles shattered,
From cold bondage breaks away.

As the icy fetters loosen,
Little trickling streamlets run
From the snow banks to the gutters,
And the wary walkers shun
Icy spots upon the sidewalk,
Untouched by the melting sun;
While the hurdy-gurdy organ
Has a merry tune begun.

And the earth rolls on its journey
Towards the vernal equinox,
While the soft breeze, from the southland,
Frozen swamp and swale unlocks.
Now a red-winged blackbird, lighting
On a lone rush, sways and rocks,
And the wild geese, winging northward,
Honk, o'erhead, in V-shaped flocks.

Then the oft repeated marvel
Of the opening bud recurs,—
Springing grass, unfolding flower cups,—
Every force in nature stirs,
Seeking outlets for expression,
Such exuberance is hers;
Working magic transformations
With a might that naught deters;

Till, at length, in all completeness,
  Through its silent, hidden might,
Bursts the spring, in full effulgence
  Once again upon the sight.
Winds caressing, white clouds drifting,
  Land birds soaring in glad flight;
Nature, scattering wide her bounty,
  Re-creates and makes earth bright

Requiescat

Our Boys who died in France, 1918

—They gave:
That men might live, and might be free,
That earth a fairer place might be,
That truth and justice, honor, right,
Humanity, the gospel's light,
Might have ascendency in life;
That there might be an end of strife,
That Liberty, her torch held high,
Might light the world, bid darkness fly.

—They gave:
Regardless of the stress and strain,
The heat, the fight, the burning pain;
Not counting cost, nor thinking aught
Of selfish aims or ends. They sought
To rescue the oppressed, who feel
The weight and shame of iron heel;
Without desire for place or power,
For gain or glory, fortune's dower,
Or for the glamours that advance
The trade of war and lifted lance.

They gave up ease, life's plans and all,
Responsive to their country's call.
They gave unstinted—no reserve—
Their one desire, that they might serve.
No matter what the sacrifice,
No matter in what frightful guise
The stroke might come; without a pause,
With deep devotion to a cause,
They gave the utmost men can give,
Content that right, not they, might live,
Assured the noble deed survives:
They gave themselves, their all, their lives.

The Cayuse

THE Cayuse that is bred
In some parts of the west,
Though an equine in fact,
Is a mongrel at best;
But a very good nag
For the cowboys, in suits
Of rough buckskin, to ride
Over prairies and buttes.

He's a bit undersized,
Is not handsome nor mild,
But is gawky and gaunt,
With an eye that glares wild
And a sinister mien,
That bodes ill for conceit
In the confident man,
Whom he chances to meet.

He's a pack of tense nerves,
Of tough tendons and bones;
All his muscles, like steel,
Are as solid as stones.
Minus fat, mostly brawn,
He's quite scrawny beside,
With his framework enclosed
In an ill-fitting hide.

But he'll travel all day
With scarce nothing to eat,
And at night seem as fresh
As at noon, and as fleet;
And will cover more miles,
With less heat and less fuss,
Than will many a steed
With a pedigree, plus.

You may stake him outside
  Anywhere, for the night,
Let him roll, shake and stretch,
  Have a drink and a bite
Of dried grass, a few blinks;
  Then remount; take the rein;—
And he's ready to start
  On the long trail again.

But you'll have to learn how,
  If you wish to secure
A safe seat on his back,
  And its tenure insure;
For, in all the sly tricks
  And the evil designs
That are wrapped up in beasts,
  The Cayuse surely shines.

As you raise your left foot
  To the stirrup, and spring
For the saddle, he shies;
  With a circular swing
He is out of your reach,
  Then keeps whirling around
So that, if you're not spry,
  You will be on the ground.

But at length, a fair vault
  Lands you squarely on top;
Then he'll buck, jerk and balk,
  Will jump sideways and drop,
With his nose to the dust
  And his heels in the air:
If not thrown from his back
  It will stiffen your hair.

Should you happen to stay
  For a while, on the high
Upper deck of this ship
  Of the prairie, don't try
To appear unconcerned;
  He's not through with you yet,
But just waiting his chance
  To pull off an upset.

In a swift, measured lope,
  With the swing and the sway
Of a cradle he'll go,
  And a rhythmical play,
Like the waves on the beach,
  Just as gentle and bland—
Then an earthquake, at least,
  Is let loose, right at hand!

With a vicious side jump
  And a shiver and shake,
Then a jar and a jolt,
  His emergency brake
Is applied—and perhaps
  You will land in the brush;
While he's off in a jiff,
  With a snort and a rush.

Innate Melody

OF all of our sweet feathered songsters,
That come from the south on the eve
Of springtime and summer, these two would
I take as my choice—by their leave:

The thrush, that nests low in the bushes;
The robin, that builds 'neath the eaves—
Or sometimes in fruit tree or maple,
Half hidden by sheltering leaves.

The robin's melodious at sunrise,
The thrush sings superbly at eve,
A clear, liquid note that's entrancing,
At dusk, just as day takes its leave.

But none of their soul-lifting music
That thrills us, is found on the leaves
Of any known song book; it all was
Imparted by God, as was Eve's.

A Sleigh Ride

ON a winter evening when earth's mantle white,
Covering all the landscape, glistens in the light:
A familiar story, very often told,
Going out sleighriding—but it's never old.

In a single cutter usually you go,
With a speedy trotter, gliding o'er the snow.
When someone's beside you, tucked in nice and warm,
Really it's delightful—and in proper form.

Cheeks as red as roses in the crispy air,
Eyes with joy a-sparkling, just beneath her hair;
Merry talk and laughter up the hills and down,
Make it interesting, as you drive from town;

Underneath the branches of the maples tall,
Arching in the moonlight, traced where shadows fall;
While the sleigh bells jingle to the measured play
Of the hoof beats, falling on the white highway.

Through the open country, in the silvery shine,
With your pulses bounding, and a slackened line,
You quite fail to notice, when the horse's pace
Settles into walking, as you glimpse her face;

Bright and animated with the joy of youth,—
And it sets you thinking, does she guess the truth?
For you feel a something tugging at your heart—
Then the steed bounds forward with a sudden start!

And you're off, a racing back towards town and home,
While the fleet bay gelding's lightly flecked with foam,
To her father's dwelling, where her cheery smile
As she thanks you kindly, lights your homeward mile.

Reminiscent picture of a time gone by;—
Sleighing's in the discard, now that autos fly.
But I fear that romance, midst the puff and grind
Of a speeding motor, sometimes lags behind.

Lullaby

SLEEP peacefully on downy pillow
As though embarked on drowsy billow;
May daytime's doubts and cares, distressing,
Drift far away and leave a blessing.

May He, whose stars hold vigil nightly,
While burning ceaselessly and brightly,
Throughout the dark, whilst thou art sleeping,
Safe hold thee in His care and keeping.

When morning comes, with sunlight streaming
Into this room where thou art dreaming,
Awake, refreshed, thy burdens lightened,
And all thy life and outlook brightened.

The Thanksgiving Baby

HE CAME at Thansgiving
As sometimes they do,
All dimpled and rosy,
With eyes of deep blue
That opened in wonder
On marvelous sights,
So new and so dazzling
To these tiny mites.

'Twas such a strange world that
First greeted his gaze,—
So many queer people,—
So much to amaze;
Confusing new-comers,
Like this little tot:
'Twas certainly puzzling!
Explain he could not.

And while he just couldn't,
Except in a way
Peculiar to babies,
Announce that he'd stay,
We guessed this one token
Conveyed what he meant:
That shrill, lusty voicings
Expressed his content.

He smiled then so sweetly,
We could but adore
The dear little fellow,
Who wouldn't say more
Than "coo," as he snuggled
Up close to ma-ma,
A winking and blinking
At happy pa-pa;

While grandma and grandpa,
And uncles and aunts
Were busy and bustling,
And ready to dance
Attendance on baby,
Whose advent, with joy
Had filled the whole household,
Because 'twas a boy.

He's plump as a dumpling,
From little pug nose
Clear down to the tips of
His ten tiny toes;
Has cherry red lips that
Are ripe to be kissed,
But looks pugilistic,
With doubled-up fist.

Then, kicking and squirming
As all babies will—
One couldn't expect them
To always keep still—
He nestled down snugly
To take his first nap,
While smiles beatific
Shone out from his wrap.

Grow up, little baby,
To be a good man.
We'll point the direction
As straight as we can,
With this our best wish,
Which we hope may prove true;—
That many may owe their
Thanksgivings to you.

Red Cloud

WHEN that transcontinental line
Of railway, the N. P.,
Prepared to finish up its tracks
In eighteen eighty-three,
They brought a man to boss the job
And drive the golden spike,
Who knew the game from A to Z
His given name was Mike.

He'd won his spurs when building first
That railroad, overland,
Which started out from Omaha
For Salt Lake's briny strand.
'Twas there he learned, in handling men,
To never disappoint;
And laid the track in sixty-nine
Past Promontory Point.

Some sixty years or more he'd seen,
Light thatching topped his head;
But brawny, straight and strong remained,
With beard of fiery red;
In contrast to the verdant isle
Which claimed him as her son.
He was both courteous and firm,
And not averse to fun.

He worked a crew of Irish lads
A-laying down the rails:
The "spikers," "nippers," "heelers," men
Who "peddled" spikes from pails;
The chaps who bolted up the joints;
The ones who spaced the ties;
And those who brought the track to "gauge"—
He called them all his "byes."

Among them were the Nary pair,
Ed Healy, Pat O'Rourke,
Big Mulligan and Happy Jack
And Chinny Jim, from Cork;
All likely lads,—but then, he said,
He needed no clairvoy'nt
To tell him 'twas a better crew
At Promontory Point.

But oft his ruddy features shone
When all was going well,—
The ties all scattered out ahead,
The locomotive bell
Announcing fresh car loads of rails
Arriving, as he hears
The music of the clanging steel,
Entrancing to his ears.

And when the "iron car" loaded up,
The black horse, good "Old Nig,"
With head low down and muscles tense,
Pulled steadily. The rig
Along the new laid "half-spiked" rails
Went forward with a bound,
And speeded to the "end of track,"
The Micks all seated 'round.

But never was he quite content
With any record made,
Was always "loosing miles of track,"
No matter how much laid.
The "byes" were not like those of old
For tightening up a joint.
"Yees ought to see the crew we had
At Promontory Point."

And sometimes, when things went awry—
A grade of slippery mud;—
The tie teams struggling up the banks;—
Their loads spilled with a thud;—
The whole crew on the bum; then came
A sudden flash and flare,
While waving arms, crisp, lurid oaths,
And whiskers filled the air.

But when the daily task's complete,
The evening he enjoys.
He smokes his pipe with conscience clear,
And jollies up the boys
With tales of early frontier days,
And reminiscent lore
Of Red Cloud fierce, the big Sioux chief,
Whose sobriquet he bore.

Then when the rails from East and West
United at Gold Creek,
And Hank Villard and General Grant
Were there, with others thick,
The men laid down a stretch of track
Before the gathered crowd,—
An exhibition of their skill;
The hero was Red Cloud.

And now he's gone to his reward,
Like ripened sheaf of wheat,
One wonders if there's track to lay
To make his joy complete.
Felicity 'twould be indeed,
With nothing out of joint,
If he, up there, might lay it 'round
Some Promontory Point.

A Prayer for Peace

1915

ALMIGHTY GOD, our Father, unto Thee
We come, in prayer of intercession, for
The nations rocked and scourged by awful war,
And torn by strife and woe on land and sea;
That, as the winds on storm-tossed Galilee
Were calmed, thou now wouldst hush the battle's roar,
Fierce passion roused, subdue; stay streams that pour
From fratricidal wounds; and bid death flee.
May all the conflict and the carnage cease,
All swords be broken, and each belching gun
Be stilled; and, to this war-worn world grant then,
If so thou wilt, a righteous, lasting peace,
An end of hate, true brotherhood begun:
All for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Christmas

THIS simple rhyme of Christmas time
Is sent to you, good friends and true,
To wish you joy, without alloy,
Abounding health, worth more than wealth,
With real content and blessings, sent
From Him above, whose name of love
We all adore; as men of yore,
Both rich and wise, with down-cast eyes—
The Magi three, on bended knee—
Adored the Babe in manger laid.

Then gifts untold of yellow gold,
Frankincense, myrrh, and all that were
The best they had, they gave Him, glad
That they might see the King to be;
And worshiped Him in stable dim;
Where shining star, seen from afar,
Had led them straight, without a wait,
From distant lands, 'cross desert sands,
Through night and day, a weary way,
To Him, who came in God's own name,
All hearts to win and save from sin,
And that on earth peace might have birth.

This glad refrain the angel train,
From realms of light that holy night,
Sang in the air to shepherds, where,
On hillside steep, they watched their sheep;
Proclaiming then good will to men,
From Him on high, whom human eye
Might never see, but who would be
A Father kind, for all to find:
Whene'er distressed, by troubles pressed,
By doubts assailed, or sorrow flailed,
And comfort send, all woes to mend,
By his own Son, the new-born One,
With happiness, mankind to bless.

And who would draw by love, not law,
Men everywhere to come in prayer,
For Christ's own sake their sins forsake,
And freely give themselves, and live
With malice naught, the way He taught,
And serve Him true—and serve men, too.

And that is why the low and high
And this glad day their homage pay
To Holy Child of Mary mild,
And presents send, from friend to friend.
Then hearts expand, and open hand
Relieves all need by kindly deed,
While joys abound the whole world 'round;
And loves abide, at Christmas tide.

Halley's Comet

May, 1910

CELESTIAL visitant, from realms beyond our ken,
With fiery train athwart the sky in hurried flight,
Whence comest thou, from out the abysmal depths of space,
And whither bound, in wide encircling orbit bright?

How many eons hast thou traced thy charted course?
When didst thou start thy journey through these spaces drear?
What is thy errand? What good purpose dost thou serve?
What message dost thou bear to us? Why are thou here?

How wide is space! so soon thou traversest the reach
Of human sight, a distance mind can scarce conceive;
Then on, thy pilgrimage pursued, to goal remote,
In star-strewn fabric, product of eternal weave.

In thy swift race, a long ellipse about the sun
It takes, ere thou return'st again—a lifetime's span
For thee, in never tiring flight, to make the round—
From dewey youth to hoary age of mortal man.

What thinkest thou—if thou hast sense, and comprehend'st
The mighty marvels strewn about thy endless way,—
Of vast creation's boundless reach, of this our own
Green earth, to us so great—to thee, a bit of clay,

Or star dust floating past, scarce noticed in the maze
Of blazing suns and planets trooping down the sky;
Is this, our earth, as sometimes we are prone to think,
More favored than are other planets we descry?

And of mankind, the veriest mites upon this grain
Of matter, ever circling round—a minute ball—
What thinkest thou? Do we partake, as oft it seems
We must, of that Intelligence who formed it all?

And are there beings, far removed on other spheres
Strewn through the firmament, who thy swift transit scan,
As we do now? What is their form, their life, their state?
Do they resemble us, as man resembles man?

And dost thou, in thy far remotest reach and swing,
Come into closer touch than we, with Him whose might
First set in motion all these whirling worlds and suns,
Revolving silent through unending day and night?

And hast thou seen Omnipotence, who hurled them forth
As well as thou, upon thy fiery age-long flight;
And canst thou tell us now, or wouldst thou, couldst thou speak,
Some more of Him, whose flowing garment is the light?

And dost thou know, when man is done with mortal life,
And spirit takes its flight—hast thou not seen sometime—
Where dwell, and what the state, of that increasing throng,
Who go and find, we fondly trust, a fairer clime?

Thou'rt gone again! The eternal secret's unrevealed.
Thou answerest not, and all our questioning is vain.
We scan the sky, with eager interest still aroused,
And see remaining but a fading fiery train.

The Alkali Club

WHEN the Alkali Club met at eight, in the back
Of the engineer's car at the "end of the track,"
And the scribe, with a quill balanced high on his ear,
Called the roll in shrill voice, every man answered "here."

There was Red Cloud, the boss of the track-laying gang,
And the engineer, too, who spoke out with a bang.
There was Murf, of the teams, who was brought up on cod
Fish, on Cape Breton Isle, and Ralph Slim, with his rod.

There was Dab, of the store, from his home in the South;
And the suave Dr. C., with cigar in his mouth.
Then came Billy, the grain man; and Frank, who was strong,
With the tenderfoot clerk; and tall John with a song.

And the bookkeeper man, with the blacksmith, A. B.,
Also Foley, who shot a black bear in a tree;
The head cook, from his stews; and the big boss of all,
With some others, to make up the total roll call.

When the High Potentate, from his throne on the bin,
Had announced that the meet was about to begin,
A commotion arose in one end of the car—
For some villain had swiped the suave Doc's choice cigar.

Then, when peace again reigned, and the dastardly deed
Was reproved, the Po-tate, just about to proceed,
All at once dropped from sight as the cover caved in,
And the coal bin collapsed, with an ear-splitting din.

But his two valiant aids with devoted dispatch
Sprang to extricate him, which they did; and their
catch,
Rather worse for his bath in black dust, took his
throne,
A glad song was struck up, which at once restored
tone.

Then the Sage Bush revered, in its urn, an old pail,
Was produced, and each one plighted faith to the bail,
As they quaffed the sage tea—with some alkali dust
Shaken in to add zest, and a dash of iron rust.

When the lamps were turned low, and the little
smudge fire
Which had boiled the sage brew, just about to expire,
Spurted up with weird light, through the shadowy
gloom,
All the fellows lit up, and good smoke filled the room.

They recalled former days, in the East, or somewheres,
And the sweethearts they'd left, and forgot all their
cares.
Then the tenderfoot spoke and desired to propose
To the ladies a toast, and to one, named Miss Rose.

Now it chanced that tall John had his eye on this girl,
Then a guest on the train, and jumped up with a whirl.
"I object," he declared, "that the tenderfoot here
Should profane thus a name which to one may be dear."

Then said Dab of the store, who had also aspired
For the heart of the maid, that "he'd not be retired."
And the Doctor declared that his rights he knew best,
That he "never would have her the butt of a jest";

When the bookkeeper man, who for some time had been
On good terms with the girl, at this point butted in.
Then Ralph Slim took a shy—"Sirs, she's mine by good right;"
And the engineer cried—"To protect her, I'll fight."

Then a scrimmage began. In the darkness all rushed,
And the precious Sage Brush, toppled over, was squshed;
While the shining white front of the tenderfoot's shirt,
Crumpled up, was besmirched with the coal dust and dirt.

Down the engineer's back, while 'twas hot as could be
And quite smarty and wet, went the pot of sage tea,
Somewhat dampening his joy; when he let out a yell
That dispersed the whole bunch, helter-skelter, pell-mell.

Then the transitman's rod, with a resonant whack,
Hit the Doc. in the small of his medical back,
While a-down the steep bank rolled his choice cigar stub:
And that meet was the last of the Alkali Club.

A Valentine

IF all the stars, that nightly shine
Above the couch where I recline,
And all the bells whose tones combine
In harmonies almost divine,
All poetry in rhythmic line,
With every sketch and each design
And painting that famed artists sign;
All woods of oak and lofty pine,
The bittersweet and wild woodbine
That, with their tendrils, trees entwine;
The daintiest foods on which kings dine,
And all the wealth of corn and kine,
With cellars full of choicest wine
Expressed from fruitage of the vine;
And all the castles of the Rhine,
The rarest treasures of the mine,
And all that's lovely, all that's fine,
Delightful, soulful and benign,—
With all the things I can't define,—
Were offered me, and might be mine:
The whole I'd cheerfully decline,
And all these riches I'd resign,
If I might know—and not repine—
That you would be my Valentine.

Autumn

WHEN autumn displays her bright banner
Each year, with the passing of time,
And lights up the world with a splendor
That verges upon the sublime;

When every bush and high tree top
Is flaming with colors so rare,—
The veriest hues of the rainbow,
Caught from and impressed by the air;

'Tis then earth is dressed in her glory.
The hills such rare vestments unfold
That every gleam, as it lingers,
Transforms them to fabrics of gold.

The sun, riding high in the heavens
Diffusing his luminous rays,
Now touches and kindles the leafage
'Till every bush is ablaze.

The days going on, colors deepen
And glow, as coals fanned by a breeze,
The hillside, a vast conflagration,
Unchecked in its march through the trees.

The light that's subdued and is softened
By hazes that hang in the air,
Brings harmony out of the contrasts,
A blending of shades everywhere.

Acclaim then, these wonders of nature,
For this is the crown of the year!
We know though, full well, from its tokens,
The end of the cycle draws near.

Even then, though we know all this brightness
Will fade, and leaves wither and fall,
That warmth and color will vanish
And chill winter reign over all;

Yet nevertheless, in the springtime
We're sure the stark limbs will be clad
In raiment of beauty and verdure,
And earth wake again and be glad.

That, though all may seem sere and lifeless,
'Tis not an occasion for gloom;
They wait but the breath of the south wind
To burst again into full bloom.

We learn thus, this change in the seasons
But typifies changes that we
Shall some day all make in our beings—
That beauty but ashes shall be.

We trust, though, the Father, so thoughtful
For things without sense, like the trees,
Will surely wake us to new living,
With bodies more glorious than these;

That when, this brief life being over,
We sleep in the bosom of earth,
He'll not lightly quench thus, forever,
The vital spark, kindled at birth;

That sleeping will be but transition,
A rest from earth's cares and its strife;
Arising, in glad resurrection,
We'll come into fullness of life.

Blueberry Pie

IN the summer, along with the month of July,
The small fruits and big melons, comes blueberry pie!

So constrained by its goodness, unequalled, am I,
As to sing the rare virtues of blueberry pie.

But at first let's describe it: You'll find, if you try,
There are all sorts of compounds called blueberry pie.

There are some where the crust is so tough, you must pry
With your might to get into that blueberry pie;

And at last when you do, you will wish you'd steered shy
From these vile imitations—not blueberry pie.

There are some ones too mushy, some others too dry,
It takes skill to produce a good blueberry pie.

But you'll find the right kind, if you hunt, bye and bye,—
A rare treat for a king is such blueberry pie.

Now the crust must be flaky, the berries must lie
All in rich juicy layers in blueberry pie.

Through the slits in the top if you look, you'll espy
Streaks of juice welling up from the blueberry pie;

While the fragrant aromas you whiff, fairly vie
With each other, to tempt you to blueberry pie.

When the richly browned crust is first cut, you'll know why,
As you taste it, I laud this rare blueberry pie.

It just melts in the mouth, and the flavor, oh my!
It's supremely delicious—fresh blueberry pie.

You may eat to your fill, for there's never a cry
From an over-indulgence in blueberry pie.

And the up-to-date health boards, with keen searching eye,
Gladly put their O. K. upon blueberry pie.

There is only one sorrow you'll find with a sigh,
And that's when there's no more of the blueberry pie.

But we'll look fondly forward, as seasons roll by,
To the time when, again, there'll be blueberry pie.

For there's nothing so good in our pie craft, or high
Up in my estimation, as blueberry pie.

So I'll gratefully praise, and extol to the sky,
The good cook who devised the first blueberry pie.

The Corn Frolic

LARKS are in the meadow,
  Crickets in the grass;
Apples getting mellow
  Everywhere you pass.

Summer is advancing,
  Corn will soon be ripe;
Then there will be dancing
  In the barn, some night.

Men and maidens gather
  From the near-by farms,
Talking 'bout the weather,
  Or the new school "marms."

Soon's they're through with greeting,
  Tasks are then begun,
Everybody mixing
  Work with stacks of fun.

When we've finishing husking,
  Red ears all are found,
'Twill be interesting
  Whirling girls around.

After that the supper,
  Seated on the floor,
Songs and talk and laughter:
  Plates passed up for more.

Then, an hour 'fore midnight,
  Time I most prefer,
Going home by moonlight
  With—oh well—just her.

The Barometer

THIS curious thing, in a case made of brass,
With levers and rods and a cover of glass,
Has figures and marks on its face, like a clock,—
But doesn't tell time, not a tick nor a tock.

Designed to determine the pressure of air
And whether the weather'll be stormy or fair,
It shows by a pointer, that swings to and fro,
The record each day—just how high, or how low.

A clever device, and convenient as well,
The weather's condition in truth to foretell:
So look for a drouth, when the marker ascends;
Take rubbers and raincoats, when downward it trends.

But harnesses, sometimes, are only a joke;
The weather's a steed that has never been broke.
When fair is the forecast, with sunshine galore,—
As likely as not, before night it will pour!

Crooked Bill

IN the early days of Bismarck—
Frontier town of tents and shacks—
When the west was wild and woolly
And its morals somewhat lax;
Court proceedings, as conducted,
Like the cyclone's sudden storm,
Got results, sometimes directly,
Waiving precedent and form.

'Mongst the crowd of early timers
Flocking to the river town,
Merchants, liquor men and gamblers,
Plainsmen, tanned a deep, dark brown,
Railroaders, some doctors, lawyers,
Faro dealers out for wealth,
Roustabouts and bunco steerers—
No one there just for his health—

There was one man, quite the toughest
On the whole Missouri slope,
Shooting up saloons and dance halls,—
Once had barely missed the rope.
Where he came from, no one worried—
As to pasts most men kept still—
No one knew his patronymic,
So they called him Crooked Bill.

He was up one time for trial
As a horse thief, on a charge
That had been preferred against him
At his capture, when at large,
With the stolen goods upon him,
As he headed for the woods;
Or, to state it more exactly,
Crooked Bill was on the goods.

When the bailiff rapped attention
As the court convened at ten,
And announced it was in session,
To a motley crowd of men,
Bill's case soon was called for trial,
And the counsel for the State
Being ready first, the Judge asked,
As proceedings seemed to wait:—

"Who appears for the defendant?
Have you an attorney, Bill,
Someone here to represent you?—
If you've not—why then I will
Name some lawyer in the court room,
Who will take up your defense.
Tell your story to him squarely,
Follow his advice with sense."

Bill allowed he had no lawyer,
Didn't know no legal chap,
Had no mon with which to pay him,
Didn't give a blinkin' rap.
So the court named, in compassion
For the poor dub, Norman Mink—
As the case was dead against him,
Not a chance to clear the gink.

Norm was sharp and shrewd and crafty,
With a record next to none;
All his clients, toughs and gamblers,
And he nearly always won.
So the judge, for he was human,
Laughed a bit behind his back,
Thought he'd handed out to Norman
Then, a nut too hard to crack.

"Give your client," said his honor,
"Every service that you can.
Disregard his wretched station;
He's entitled, as a man,
When before a court of justice,
To the rights the laws provide.
So, advise to his advantage.
Maybe you can save his hide."

In they went to rooms adjoining—
Counsel, and the man accused,
Long the door remained unopened
And the jury was excused
While the court disposed of cases
Of a somewhat trivial kind,
When at last appeared the lawyer,—
But old Bill was not behind.

"Where's the prisoner?" quoth his honor,
"We are ready now to try."
"May it please the court," said Norman,
Pointing to the window nigh,
"Way off there on the horizon
Just a riding o'er the hill:
There's the man for whom you're looking!
That, I'm sure, is Crooked Bill!"

Then the Court, in rage, addressed him:
"What is this? You mean to say
You've connived to free a prisoner,
Helped the accused to get away,
Smirched the sanctity of justice?
'Tis a crime of grave import;
I will fine and then I'll jail you
For this gross contempt of court."

"I will yield to none, in reverence
For the majesty of law;
My respect for court and judges,"
Said the lawyer, "has no flaw.
I have carried out the order
As assigned me by the court
To the letter, with good conscience.
If it please thee, I'll report.

"When I'd heard the story told me
Straight, I'm sure, by Crooked Bill,
I could render but one service,
Could advise the sorry pill
To his real advantage only—
Or could hope to save his hide—
By suggesting, he might hustle
Through the window opened wide.

"Then, before I could restrain him,
Out he popped—refused to stay—
With no chances in a trial,
Took that chance to get away;
There he is, fast disappearing,
Must have stole another hoss,
Looks as though he'd clear the county,
'Fore the sheriff gets across."

Accountics

KEEPING household accounts
Is at times quite bore,
With the cash coming out
Either short, or just more
Than enough to square up,—
You're behind, or before.

But at last there's a book
Full of columns and dates,
For things bought by the yard
And for those sold by weights;
There's a place for each one
From new hats to tin plates.

With this system in force
One may save stacks of pelf.
It's as easy to keep
As are books on a shelf;
For, in fact, 'twill almost,
If not quite, keep itself.

An Un-even Exchange

IF YOU would like a valentine
From one who ever would be thine,
Accept this little book, I pray,
To mark the heart's remembrance day.
'Twas written by the Avon bard
Who wove romances by the yard,
Of blushing belle and gallant beau,
Like Rosalind and Romeo.
And there you'll find, lest I mistake,
That all true lovers give and take;
So, as I give, I'd like as mine,
You only, for my valentine.

Time

AS the earth rolls around
Every twenty-four hours,
Regulating the clocks
In the lofty stone towers
In succession it brings
Every spot, so we learn,
Into morning, noon, night,
With its silent, swift turn.

Every minute that's marked
On the clock's open face,
Is the time of day now
On the earth at some place.
When it's sunrise somewhere,
At another it's noon.
Further on, early eve,
While beyond, shines the moon.

With the seasons, the same.
In their march through the year,
Everyone, at this time,
Is somewhere, if not here.
There are spring days some place.
Somewhere else summer stays.
Then the autumn has space,
And a stretch of cold days.

'Tis the same with mankind
Too; for, mirrored in each
Single moment, there's seen
The whole span of life's reach;
From the newly born babe,
Through bright youth, and the strength
Of maturity to ————,
Feeble age, its whole length.

With the myriads of stars,
  And the planets, that burn
Far away in the blue,
  There's the same ceaseless turn;
From the nebulous whirl
  To the swift fiery ball,
The cooled sphere; till, at last,
  A dark object is all.

Just how long 'twill endure,
  Or how long it hath been—
This procession of years—
  Is beyond human ken;
But we glimpse, as we scan
  The high heavens, alight
With the flame of the stars,
  Untold time at one sight.

Not Complainin'

I'M not given to complainin';
Though, with all its doubts an' fears,
They's a sight o' things to vex one
Travelin' through this vale o' tears.

Take the livin' in the country,
An' a-carryin' on the farm,
With the everlastin' drudg'ry,
Achin' back an' painin' arm;

With the crops sometimes a failin',
'Count o' too much rain or heat,
An' the hard times, an' the plannin'
So's to make the two ends meet.

Then the bringin' up the children,
Plenty of 'em, big an' small,
With their wants—'tis such a problem—
Jest to rightly train 'em all.

Not to speak of all the measles
An' the 'hoopin' cough an' croop,
An' the mendin' an' the cookin'
For a dreadful hungry group.

Through the winter's cold and freezin',
When the summer's hot an' dry,
In the spring time damp and chilly,
An' when autumn's winds are high;

There is work at night an' mornin',
An' most all the time between;
Scrubbin', milkin' cows an' churnin',
Makin' soap an' keepin' clean.

Then there's Josh down in the barn yard
Settin' on a buggy seat,
Ruminatin' through the mornin',
When his work's not near complete;

While I'm bendin' o'er the wash tub,
With the sweat, a runnin' stream
From the tiresome, steady rubbin',
Minglin' with the risin' steam.

An' I can't help think that woman,
When the jobs for each were sot,
Though the men folks say she's weaker,
Got, somehow, the harder lot.

P'r'aps 'twas 'cause she 'lowed the sarpint
In the garden, long ago,
To beguile her with the apple,—
An' she's payin' for it so.

For the men have time for restin',
Though they work "from sun to sun;"
While, from risin' to retirin',
"Woman's work is never done."

Now, the men may do the votin',
While the women darn the socks;
But they, too, will soon be settlin'
Questions at the ballot box.

But, I said, I'm not complainin',
An' I'm not intendin' to.
Jest a listin' of a few things
That a body has to do.

They're as many more to cheer one,
An' I'm thankful all the while
For a home, my fam'ly, plenty,
An' all others, quite a pile.

While they's joys an' while they's sorrows,
After all is done an' said,—
If you'll figger woes an' blessin's,
Blessin's mostly are ahed.

An Indian Grave

SOMEWHERE in the western country
With its wonders and its thrills,
Where the foothills meet the prairies
And the mountains meet the hills,
Where the Yellowstone is rushing
From the uplands to the sea,
Where the eagle cleaves the ether
And the Redman once was free;

There, amidst the wilds of nature
Which he loved and where he roamed,
Bounded by the wide horizon
And by high empyrean domed,
In the edges of the timber,
On a bench above the wave
Of the rapid winding river,
Was entombed an Indian brave.

Not in sepulchre of marble
Marked by massive granite block,
Nor, as in some ancient places,
Was it hewn in native rock;
But a rude and fragile structure
Elevated on rough poles,
Twice man's height above the level,
Where an owl his requiem tolls.

Not, for him, a narrow lodgment
In a cerement of clay,
Cramped and crowded, close, constricted,
Waiting for the judgment day;
But in open air and sunshine,—
Not imprisoned 'neath the loam,—
He would rest, naught intervening
'Twixt him and the spirit home.

In his thought, 'twas not a city
With its every gate a pearl,
With foundations, walls of jasper
And a busy urban whirl;
But a wide and boundless region,
Where a free, aspiring soul
Might, untrammeled, roam forever,
With eternity his goal.

Would that Spirit, great and mighty,
Lord of earth, unmeasured space
And the myriad worlds throughout it,
Thus confine to one small place
Man, the noblest of his creatures,
Howsoever well employed,
With a soul and all its yearnings,
And leave all the rest a void?

Love of freedom deeply planted
In the soul, made clear to him
That, with all the universes
Held within creation's rim,
The Great Spirit had intended,
In his wise beneficence,
Man might share and should enjoy them
When at last he's summoned hence.

Shakespeare—Bacon

Tercentenary, April 23rd, 1916

THIS ponderous tome contains the career
And the works, 'tis alleged, of one William
Shakespeare,
Who wrote long ago, yes many a year,
Of Hamlet, Macbeth, and of poor old King Lear.

But critics declare, with half disguised sneer,
It was Bacon, not William, who was the real seer;
And that in the text he made it quite clear
To all who'll discipher the cryptogram queer.

The others refute, and turn a deaf ear
Unto all such preposterous claims that they hear;
And so they contend,—and then, without fear
Of rout, they just glare at each other and jeer.

N—E—W—S

I'M confined, in life's race,
To the narrowest bound;
Just fixed fast to a place,
With the same tedious round
To be traversed, day in and day out.

Yet I ride in the sky
On the wings of the wind;
As I circle on high
I look down on mankind,
Slowly plodding along on the sod.

Then I serve as I go,
I can modestly boast,
All who reap, sail or sow;
And each day, at my post,
I am ready to do a good turn.

So take heart, if your lot
Seems all prosy and tame;
For it surely is not,
When there's joy in life's game
For a weather-vane, whirling around.

Immaculate

"HELP keep your city clean":—
This legend you have seen,
Writ on a bin
To put things in,
On down-town street, I ween.

A most direct appeal
To serve the common weal;
It calls on each
To act, not preach,
With never tiring zeal.

So gather up with care,
Debris from everywhere,—
All kinds of waste,
With tireless haste,
For safe deposit there.

Get all the worthless stuff,
And all that's rude and rough,
With every bit
Of grime and grit:
No less will be enough.

Leave no banana peel
To catch unwary heel;
Nor any dust,
Nor stale bread crust
From some half finished meal.

With scrubbing brush and mop
Clean up the slush and slop;
Vile rubbish chase,
Expunge all trace
Of muck from street and shop.

Pursue the swarthy foe,
With broomstick lay him low;
    Then flush and drench
    His tainted trench;
To dirt, no mercy show.

When through with suds and soap,
Turn on the microscope,
    And extirpate
    The germs we hate,
With antiseptic dope.

Relinquish not your toils
'Til everything that soils,
    And every stain,
    That is the bane
Of cleanliness, recoils.

At last, the town in trim,
E'en should the sun grow dim,
    Will radiate
    And scintillate,
And need no other glim.

The Legend of Oco-Como-Chee

BRAVE Oco-como-chee,
An Indian chieftain, he
In days of old,
When red men bold
Heard, from their open door,
The river Cannon's mighty roar!

Co-mo-chee set his stakes
Where early morn awakes
The echo's thud
Of thundering flood,
Upon a hill top high,
Well up towards the azure sky.

His teepee wide he spread,
And made a pine bough bed,
Upon the ground
Within the round,
For daughter Prairie Flower,
The tribal beauty's verdant bower.

And there, in sweet content,
Within the flapping tent
Abode the maid,
And never strayed
Beyond the easy sight
Of ruddy campfire's flickering light;

Until, one fateful day,
When wandering away,
She felt a dart
Strike through her heart
At sight of young Ko-shun,
A rival chieftain's valiant son.

She fell in love, he too,—
And in a birch canoe,
    Embarked upon
    The wide Can-non,
And so they sailed away
To wedded bliss, they thought for aye.

But Lo, the mighty chief,
Stung with paternal grief,
    No filial song
    The whole day long
To cheer him, pined and died,
And this is how the warrior hied:—

Into the Cannon's mouth,
Without fire-water drouth,
    Co-mo-chee plunged.
    His record sponged,
The red man hence was fired,
'Twas thus, at last, the chief expired.

And ever since that day,
The village gossips say,
    Upon the hill
    When all is still,
By evening's waning light,
You'll see, sometimes, a weird, strange sight.

Where stands a monument
To mark some late event,
    Upon the site
    Of teepee white,
The chief and maiden fair,
In ghostly form, appear in air.

Then, when the mists arise
Beneath the purpling skies,
    And pale moonbeam
    Lights distant stream
That bore the barque along,
You'll hear, perchance, the maiden's song.

Some say that she came back,
Deserted, with her pack,
    And evermore,
    Upon the shore,
With eyes and heart ayearn,
In vain waits Co-mo-chee's return.

Recognition

A MAN doesn't want to be flattered,
He's not often looking for praise,
Seldom cares for applause or for homage;
He tackles his job and he stays.

But once in a while, in the struggle
He's making to carve out a place
For himself, and to share in the fortune
That waits those who win in life's race;

Discouraged, perhaps, or uncertain
About his true goal, and the way;
When his nose is down close to the grindstone,
And things look decidedly gray;

Or if he's done something with credit,
Worked hard in an effort to reach
The solution of difficult problems,
Or made a good mouse-trap or speech.

At times such as this, if a fellow
Who's known to be true and sincere,
With opinion and judgment acknowledged,
Just whispers a word in his ear;

A word that conveys commendation,
Discreetly and honestly made,
But not over laudation, nor merely
A meaningless compliment paid;

'Twill hearten him, lighten the burden,
He'll get a new grip, will come back
To his task with new vigor, new vision;
Assured he is on the right track.

* * * * * *

A bit of deserved approbation,
To one whom you see "making good,"
Will encourage. But don't overdo it,
Nor fail to commend when you should.

The Drouth

JOHN BARLEYCORN, good bye!
A long farewell at last,
The Nation's going dry;
So take your hat and start,
There'll be no sorrow nor
Regret when you depart.

Some things we're bound to lose,
However, with the gains
To come from loss of booze.
That you may have your due
Of praise and censure, we
Will catalogue a few:

No more will glasses clink,
When raised and brimming with
Exhilarating drink;
Nor crystal goblets, crowned
With sparkling vintages,
Or frothy brew, go 'round.

No more the ruddy glow,
Or amber, glinting from
Tall bottles in a row.
No call for pocket flasks,
Or mellow liquors, stored
And ageing in great casks.

No longer stiff coal draught
In summer, nor a hot
In winter, may be quaffed;
Nor will the morning "nip,"
The mid-day "bracer," or
The "night-cap" wet the lip.

No more together get
  Good fellows, with their steins
Upon the table set;
No more hilarity,
  Nor calls to "fill them up,"
And all "drink heartily."

Nor will an aching pate,
  The morning after, tell
Of deep libations late;
Nor weak and trembling nerve,
  Or tantalizing thirst,
As sore reminders serve.

No jags, no bums, no want
  Or woe that dram-shops breed.
No haggard faces, gaunt
And drawn, no shuffling gait,
  Anxiety or fear;
While wives or mothers wait.

But there'll be empty jails
  Instead of pocket-books,
And well-filled dinner pails;
Vile habits broken chains,
  A buoyant, firmer step,
And clearer eyes and brains.

A more abounding health
  Will course the veins, and give
A better chance for wealth;
When savings banks instead
  Of men are full, and all
Their famished offspring fed.

Sobriety and worth,
  With smiles, will chase the gloom,
Bring happy children's mirth;
Then, under heaven's dome,
  With self-respect and love,
Each house may be a home.

An American

WHO is a real American?
A scholar or an artisan,
A native son of freedom's soil,
An immigrant from foreign toil,
Or any one whoe'er you please,
Possessing qualities like these:

He's optimistic, sane and strong,
Will bare his arm to right a wrong;
Believes in living straight and square,
In being and in playing fair;
Is valiant, ardent, kind and true,
Is first among the ones who do.
Alert and brainy, keen and quick,
A friend, who holds through thin and thick;
Thinks for himself and acts. He's stout
Of heart, is seldom swayed by doubt;
Is faithful, and delights in work.
He is not, and he loathes a shirk;
Has no deficiency of nerve,
Is ready everywhere to serve;
Upholds the cause of those oppressed,
Is courteous, he stands the test.
Conservative, good natured, while
He greets you with a kindly smile.
And if too oft, as some opine,
He worships at the dollar shrine,
'Tis not that profit he desires
So much as that the quest inspires.
He's self-respecting, honor bright,
Courageously defends the right,
Abhors a pretense and a sham;
A gentleman without a gram
Of shoddy in his make, but grit,
Persistency that will not quit.
Efficient, noble, unafraid,
In times of stress he's prompt to aid;

When perils menace, unperturbed;
'Midst difficulties, undisturbed;
Allegiance holds to country, home
And God, wherever he may roam.

All these are needed, many more:
Good sense and wisdom, wit and lore,
With loyalty, before a man
Becomes a good American.

In the Open

I love the world-wide out-of-doors,
The inland and the wave-washed shores;
The mountains with the vales between,
A restless river's silvery sheen;
The forest masses and the brakes,
The undulating lands and lakes;
Old Ocean with its sounding call,
The blue sky arching over all.

I love the prairie's wide expanse,
The brisk wind, leading in the dance
Of sunbeams on the bending grain,
The cool, refreshing, drenching rain;
The tree tops outlined 'gainst the sky,
Wild grasses growing rank and high;
The winding road, the purling brook,
The sunshine and the shady nook.

I love to watch the chariot race
Of storm clouds driving on apace;
The breaking day, the autumnal shades
Transforming verdant leafy glades;
The ever changing landscape view
Revealing prospects always new;
The shifting aspects of the light.
The splendor of a starry night.

The Sun Dial

SUN DIAL, Sun Dial, oh tell me the story
You write, of the flight of Old Sol, in his glory:
" 'Tis the earth that doth fly,
'Tis the sun writes—not I;
So for that, I'm happily free from all worry;
But from first beam to last,
Until sunlight is past,
Upon my broad dial the time shadow is cast."

Montana

MONTANA: upon thy high crest thou are seated,
Complacent, contented, and proud of thy place,
The empire surrounding, and all of the grandeur,
The beauty and riches thy borders embrace.

Thy mountains tumultuous, a billowy ocean
Of rough rugged ranges in retinue long,
Are rock-reinforced, and are buttressed and bastioned:
A bulwark that makes a vast continent strong.

Their summits, snow-covered, reach into the heavens
Where peaks, battlemented with rocks gray and worn
By sun and by storms of the ages unnumbered,
Stand silent and grim as tall sentinels lorn;

Safe-guarding the forests of pine and of fir trees
That clothe their sheer slopes, and the treasures untold
Deep hidden beneath them in crystalline chambers;
A fabulous storehouse of silver and gold.

The gulches and cañons, the paths that the rivers
Have patiently chiselled, or found their way through,
Are painted by nature in marvelous colors,
So rare that they rival the sunset in hue.

The waters, dividing, flow eastward and westward
In turbulent whirl. With wild laughter and glee
They dash over obstacles, leap from high shelvings,
And find in their windings the way to each sea.

The slopes of the hills in the springtime, reflecting
The rainbow, are clad in a mantle of flowers;
The breeze, lightly laden with fragrance, refreshing,
In woodland and glen in the cool morning hours.

The valleys that reach from the base of the highlands
Slope gently, are spacious, the sunshine is clear;
The rarified air, that exhilarates, opens
Long vistas by day, and at night stars are near.

The silvery mountains that girt the horizon,
The glacier's gleam, wide-winged eagles above,
The lure of the west, and its freedom, have made thee,
Montana, forever—the land of my love.

Hallowe'en

THE eve before All Hallows feast,
The day of every saint
Who's listed in the calendar,
As well as those who ain't;
In years remote, tradition tells,
Was given o'er to quaint,
Fantastic games and mystic rites,
Of superstitious taint.

The night before that day came on,
Observed time out of mind,
The young folks of the English Isle
Played pranks of various kind
In which there lurked some mystery,
Or hidden thing to find;
Some portent dire, or mirthful gibe,
For wights to sport inclined.

Great bonfires on the hills were built,
Of ancient oaks and sound,
The trees the Druids once revered,
To light the country 'round.
Then men and maidens in their best
Danced on the dewey ground,
While shouts of laughter and of glee
Made quiet eve resound.

Upon this night, once every year,
'Tis said that all the weird
And eerie things that shun the day
And love the gloom appeared.
They stalked and flew and crawled where'er
It pleased them best, and reared
Uncanny forms, and wielded powers,
By country bumpkins feared.

Then witches, 'stride of broom-stick steeds,
  Rode chattering to the sky;
While wide-eyed owls with sounding hoots,
  And some with screech and cry,
Black cats with arching backs and yowls,
  Great bats that dart and fly
On leathern wing, held carnival—
  A kind to terrify.

And snakes and scorpions and snails,
  Lean homeless dogs that bark
And snap and snarl, and nameless things,
  Uncouth and gaunt and stark;
With gruesome grimaces and grins,
  Gay goblins on a lark,
And elfins, gnomes and ugly bugs,
  Made merry in the dark.

As though the lid, that shuts and holds
  Its denizens within
The nether world, had lifted; and,
  In murky stream, the kin
And kith of imps and sprites appeared.
  With revelry and din
They wandered aimlessly alroad,
  Unkempt and lank and thin.

And topsy-turvied up and down,
  A motley, mopsy gang;
Until—when midnight struck the hour—
  With clatter clash and clang,
On foot and wing, in scrambling haste,
  With tooth and nail and fang,
They ducked beneath, just as the lid
  Was shut down with a bang.

High Tide 1919

'TIS an era of inflation,
Rates advance and prices soar,
While the higher cost of living
Knocks insistent at the door.
And the "ultimate consumer,"
With the burden that it brings,
Sees the market basket sprouting
Quite a lusty pair of wings.

There is yeast in bread and biscuit,
But the shortening's in the "dough."
Beans are breaking records climbing,
Not a thing is getting low.
Butter takes to aviation,
Eggs appear to be balloons.
Someone's heaving out the ballast
While they keep on raising prunes.

Garden truck is getting restless,
And ascending with a whoop;
Overcoming gravitation,
Summer squashes loop the loop.
Watermelons look like Zepp'lins,
Lumber's in the aeroplane.
Indications are they're making
Rockets out of sugar cane.

Big white clouds resemble dumplings,
Floating in the summer sky.
From the eagles on our coinage
Dollars quickly learn to fly.
Tariffs ride in elevators,
Taxes, too, are on the jump.
Gasoline in filling stations
Now is boosted with a pump.

Though the bovine in the ditty
Never leaped above the moon,
If this tendency continues
Sirloin steak may reach it soon.
Only some strong-winged Pegasus
Ever overtakes the hay.
Dairies next will be preempting
Sites along the milky way.

With the market "blimp" still mounting,
Or a-tugging at its ropes,
We may have to read quotations
Through long-distance telescopes.
But, while profiteers are planning
To escape with loads of loot,
May swelled prices burst the gas bag;
And descend by parachute.

Infinite Harmony

AFTER dusk has drawn its curtain,
And the hush of night succeeds
To the clanging and the clamor
That attend our human needs;
Outdoors, one may hear in summer
Voices, pitched in undertone,
Of the insects, leaves—vibrations—
Then, their origin unknown,

May be from the constellations,
Indistinct and undefined,
Come refrains, evasive fragments,
Sensed by either ear or mind.
And, in fancy, we are listening
To the music of the spheres,
Echoing through stellar spaces,
In a symphony of years.

As they roll throughout their courses
In accord, in solitude,
Each attuned to every other;
Distant melodies subdued
Seem to reach us on the breezes,
Stirring lightly in the night;
Cadences, celestial measures,
Undistinguished in the light.

Like some sweet toned astral organ
Throbbing softly through the sky,
Swelling and reverberating—
Paeans to their Lord on high.
And the song goes on forever,
Starting at creation's birth,
Linking planets, stars, together—
Faintly audible on earth.

Though the hearing be but fancy—
They revolve without a sound—
Still, their infinite adjustments
Speak a harmony profound.
But our senses here are holden,
Apprehending but in part
All the marvels, and the methods,
That connote the Eternal art.

Somewhere, sometime, when unfettered
From the thraldom that constrains,
In a wider gamut than in
These terrestrial domains;
We may hear the orchestration,
Learn the meter, score and key,
Understand the theme and movement
Of creation's harmony.

Dedication

Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, March, 1909.

WE'VE reared a temple here, in which to worship Him,
Whom men and all the hosts of heaven praise;
From quarry, mine and forest, gathered all
The parts, which strength and skill combined, have wrought
And fashioned into this complete and perfect whole.

Of granite, weather-stained, in all the brilliant hues
On nature's palette mixed, we've built the walls;
With tracery in stone, carved wood and all
The art of metal workers and of glass,
Have beautified, embellished and adorned the house;

And sought, in truth, to make it worthy of the One
We thus would magnify and laud, fit place
For him to dwell in, meeting house of God
With people; where their prayers and praises, raised,
Shall reach him and if made sincerely, shall be heard.

But when this pile shall prostrate lie in dust, and be
Abandoned and forgotten by mankind,
Shall He, the God 'twas raised to glorify,
Be then deprived of his abode, and shall
He lack a place to dwell, and fail of worshipers?

The earth is his. He founded it upon the seas,
And on the floods established he the world:
His habitation is the universe;
He dwelleth not in temples made with hands,
And needeth not that mortal man should worship him.

But, though he needeth not, yet so he loved the world,
He was constrained to send his only Son,
That men might see in him the Father's mien
And, knowing him, might learn the Father's love,
And so be drawn to him. Then, Father, this our prayer:

"Forbid that we, content with what we have, may sit
Within this house; or that we, thoughtless, use
For our behoof alone, the thing which cost
So much of time, of sacrifice and toil—
Regardless of the want of those without our doors.

But let us, glad that we may be the almoners
Of that which, given, yet remains unspent,
So use this heritage on us bestowed,
As held in trust, to further Thy design:
That all shall know and love and serve Thee as their
God."

JUN 98
BOUND BY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 907 179 0